

REMARKS

Applicants first note that the first page of the Office Action refers to claims 1-12. The examiner, however, has provided comments with respect to claims 1-13. Accordingly, applicants have treated the Office Action as rejecting claims 1-13.

Claims 1-9, 12-13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Eberbach. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

The present invention is directed to an array speaker apparatus that includes a plurality of speaker units arranged in an array. Control of the directivity of the sound generated by the speaker units is based on the application of delay signals to the input driving signals.

In contrast, Eberbach is not directed to an array speaker apparatus, but instead, discloses a system that utilizes a left front loudspeaker 34, a right front loudspeaker 36, a left surround loudspeaker 46 and a right surround loudspeaker 48. In Fig. 3 of the reference, the front speaker and surround speaker are combined into a single loudspeaker. Using the circuit of Fig. 7, the characteristics of the loudspeaker is adjusted to direct a null direction to a listener. Thus, Eberbach fails to disclose a plurality of speaker units arranged in an array. For this reason alone, the reference cannot anticipate the claims in this case.

In addition, with respect to claim 3, applicants note that the cited reference fails to disclose that a sound pressure level of sounds corresponding to the second audio signal reaching the listening position is smaller than a sound pressure level of sounds corresponding to the first audio signal reaching the listening position. Applicants respectfully request that the examiner specifically point out where this feature is found in the cited reference. Absent such a showing, the rejection is improper and should be withdrawn.

Further, applicants submit that the reference clearly does not disclose the focus feature or the angle feature respectively set forth in claims 4 and 5. Again, applicants respectfully request that the examiner specifically point out where this feature is found in the reference. Absent such a showing, the rejection is improper and should be withdrawn.

Claim 6 has been amended to include the limitation of claim 7. Applicants submit that the reference does not disclose the delay circuits as claimed. The claimed delay circuit delays an input signal by a plurality of delay times set for the plurality of speaker units respectively. Eberbach does state that the cross-over network 102 serves to delay the signal to the driver 86 (col. 8 – line 50), but a plurality of delay times are not provided corresponding to the plurality of speakers. Accordingly, the rejection is improper and should be withdrawn.

Claims 10 and 11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Eberbach and Kawano. Applicants submit that Kawano fails to overcome the deficiencies of Eberbach discussed above. Accordingly, the combination of reference, even if proper, could not yield the claimed invention.

Claims 14 and 15 have been added to further claim the features of the disclosed invention.

In view of the above, all of the claims in this case are believed to be in condition for allowance, notice of which is respectfully urged.

Respectfully submitted,
ROSSI, KIMMS & McDowell LLP

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Date

/Marc A. Rossi/
Marc A. Rossi, Reg. No. 31,923
P.O. Box 826
Ashburn, VA 20146
703-726-6020